

THE
LIFE
OF
CERVANTES:

TOGETHER WITH
REMARKS
ON HIS

WRITINGS,

BY *Charles de Flotzay*
Mr. D. E. FLORIAN.

Translated from the French
BY
WILLIAM WALLBECK.

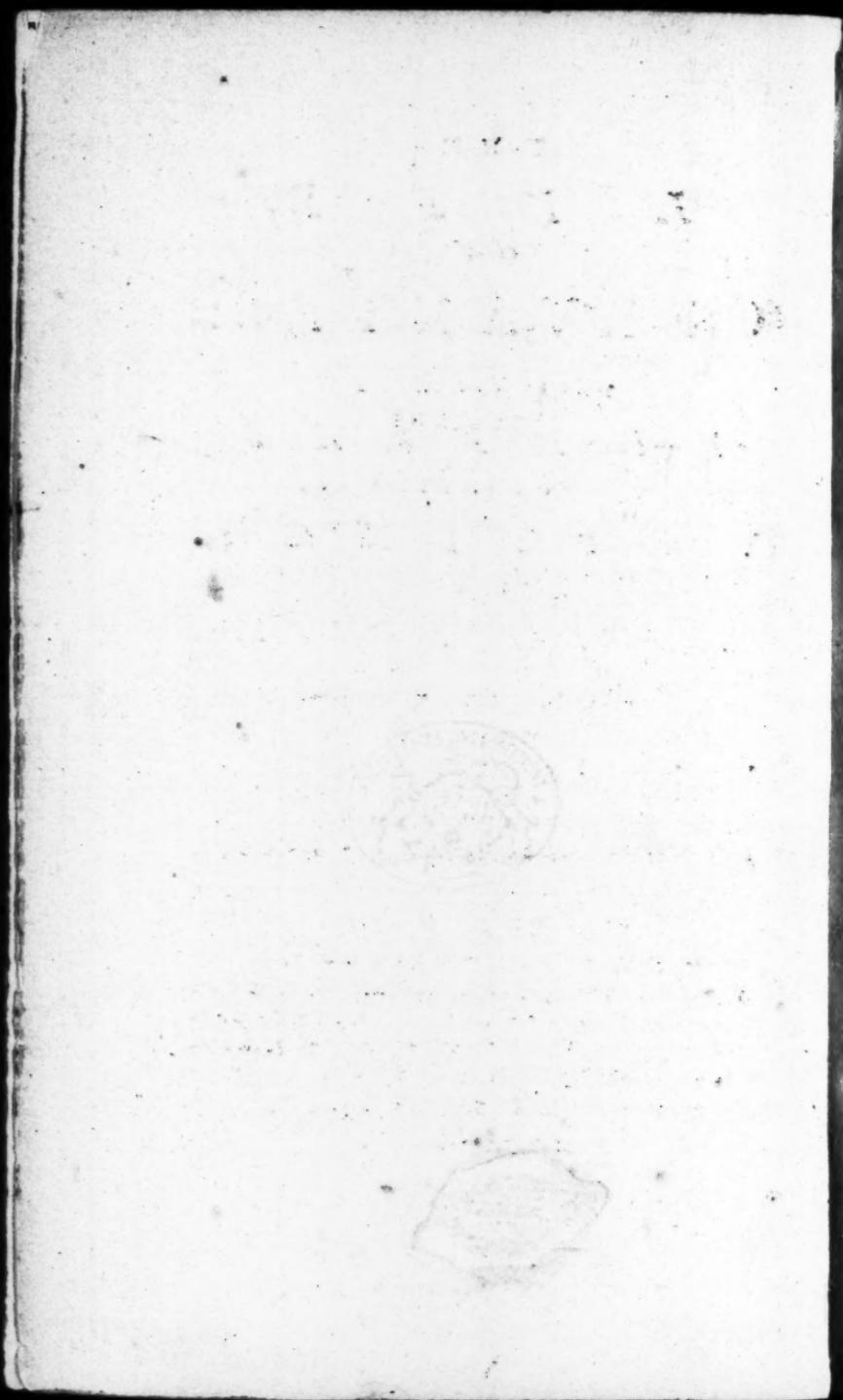
Quando illam invenient parent? HORACE.

L E E D S:

Printed by J. BOWLING,
Sold by J. BEW, *Pater-Noster-Row*; E. NEW-
BERRY, *Ludgate-Street*; H. PAYNE, *Pall-
Mall*; J. DEBRETT, *Piccadilly*; and J. ROB-
SON, *New-Bond-Street*, LONDON.

Price ONE SHILLING.

M D C C L X X V.



T O

Mrs. M A T H E W.

M A D A M,

I Beg leave herewith to present you,—not with a Romance, because it is not fiction,—but with the Life of *CERVANTES DE SAAVEDRA*; to whom such extraordinary adventures happened, that were they told us from less respectable authority than that of the Spanish Academy, we should hardly be brought to give them credit.

SAAVEDRA's captivity, and its concomitant events, as bordering on the marvellous, form that part of his History which will most excite the attention of the ordinary Reader: but you, Madam, who cannot peruse a page of his admirable "*QUIXOTE*," without enthusiastic rapture, you will be no less inquisitive about the minutest circumstances of the Author's domestic Life.

Nothing, indeed, but the fondness with which his memory is cherished by all lovers of Literature, could warrant my obtruding on the Public, a Work otherwise so insignificant: consisting only of a few pages, translated from a translation:—the shadow of a shade.

For although Mr. DE FLORIAN, the Translator out of the Spanish into French, has executed his task very ably, the knowing it to be but a version would deter almost any one of literary ambition from the yet humbler

task of turning that into English. And possibly I myself might have been discouraged from such an undertaking, had I not, upon my first meeting with his Book, chanced to compare it with the original; and, whether it was from my being so much more conversant with the French, than with the Spanish, or from Mr. DE FLORIAN's manner of writing, and his little additions, it appeared to me more lustrious as it came out of his hands. At that time, however, being abroad, I had no thought of translating it: and it was not till very lately, that, in relaxation of severer studies, which had brought upon me a fixed head-ache, I took to translating the agreeable Romance of "GALATEE;" to which the "LIFE OF CERVANTES," and the "REMARKS UPON HIS WRITINGS," stand prefixed.

Ere I had finished it, I happily got rid of my headache; and therefore dismissed my Doctor;—or, in parliamentary phrase, I threw "GALATEA" over the table; and if it is not absolutely kicked out of the House; it is a busines adjourned *fine die*.

If it were not interrupting the course of your studies of greater pith and moment, I could almost venture to recommend to your perusal Mr. DE FLORIAN's "GALATEE." As it is the only pastoral Romance I ever read in my life, I cannot speak of its merit comparatively with that of others; but I think it excessively pretty: by no means perfect; for it partakes of the common fault of all of the Novel Genus,—too much *Love*. Of which, if I lament that there is so much to be found in books, it is only because there is so little to be found anywhere else.

Love, however, is not the sole subject of the Romance, but rural Manners;—pastoral Life, in general; of which, indeed, it may be said (for it is so in *ARCADY*, as well

as

as upon the banks of the Tajo) that passion is the vital principle.

“ Landscapes only I mean to paint; (says the Author) and village manners to describe. Ye, whose bosoms are fraught with sensibility, and whose minds are uncorrupt;—ye, who relish the pleasures of a country life;—to whom are grateful rural walks, and the contemplation of nature;—ye, of pure hearts, to whom the melody of birds, or murmuring streams speak peace; lend me your attention, all: and may ye reap instruction, as well as pleasure.”

The World is grown too populous, too luxurious, and too corrupt, I fear, ever to return to its primitive simplicity: and there are thousands, and thousands, in every Metropolis in Europe, whom nothing less than a plague could drive into the country; although they are morally sure, staying where they are, to lose their health, and, perhaps, their lives, in pursuit of fortunes or honours, which they never may obtain.

I have no very sanguine hope of awakening in such infatuated persons the dictates of reason and nature: yet I cannot resist the pleasure of transcribing one particular passage, from Mr. DE FLORIAN, as a sort of abstract of rural happiness. I shall give it in his own words, which are elegantly simple, as befits the subject. It is the opening of the second book of “ GALATEA.”

“ Quand pourrai-je vivre au village! Quand serai-je le possesseur d'une petite maison entourée de cerisiers! Tout auprès seroient un jardin, un verger, une prairie, et des ruches: un ruisseau bordé de noisetiers environneroit mon empire;—et mes désirs ne pafferoint jamais ce ruisseau. Là, je coulerois

" coulerois des jours heureux : le travail, la promenade, la lecture, occuperoient tous mes moments.
 " J'aurois de quoi vivre ; j'aurois encore de quoi donner : car sans cela point de richesse ; c'est n'avoir rien que de n'avoir que pour soi. Si je pouvois jouir de tous ces biens avec une épouse sage et douce, et voir nosenfants, jouant sur le gazon, je croirois devoir exciter l'envie de tous les rois de l'univers."

Is not that beautiful ? I am certain, Madam, that, qualified as you are to shine in the most exalted sphere, your sentiments are nevertheless in perfect unison with the tone of that apostrophe : and so are those of my much-loved, and worthy friend Mr. MATHEW ; who, though eminent for his piety, learning, and oratory,—and thereby fitted for the highest dignity of the Church, is too wise, and too temperate in his desires to set his head a-aching for a Mitre.

If it should be thought Mr. DE FLORIAN has bestowed his chief care in embellishing " GALATEA ;" allowances surely will be made for him, as that is his particularly favourite, adopted Child. Besides, every one, who knows what writing is, knows,—not only with how much greater alacrity one sets about a work of fancy, but how much more readily words present themselves when not being confined to a single path, one may excuse *ad libitum*.

Mr. DE FLORIAN, however, will be found to have executed his task as Translator very ably. And I think, Madam, when you have perused the " LIFE OF CERVANTES," and " THE REMARKS UPON HIS WRITINGS," you will agree with me that the Frenchman has avinced no less good sense, than liberality and candour : and

and if he is not quite a ROUSSEAU, or DALEMBERT, he is a good Writer, and no despicable Critic.

I wish it were possible to say half as much for the *English* Translator. The only merit he dares assume is that of a faithful Copier of Mr. DE FLORIAN's outlines. In the shading, you will find he has taken the liberty to add some little strokes of his own ; by way of giving greater relief to the figures. If you, Madam, who are a perfect Connoisseur, should think he has not thereby spoilt the work, he will be more at peace with himself ; and entertain a hope that the Public will not be altogether *disatisfied* with his labour. For, in this age of literature, in which we have so many good Writers, and so many bad, negative praise is as much as an Authorling can hope for.

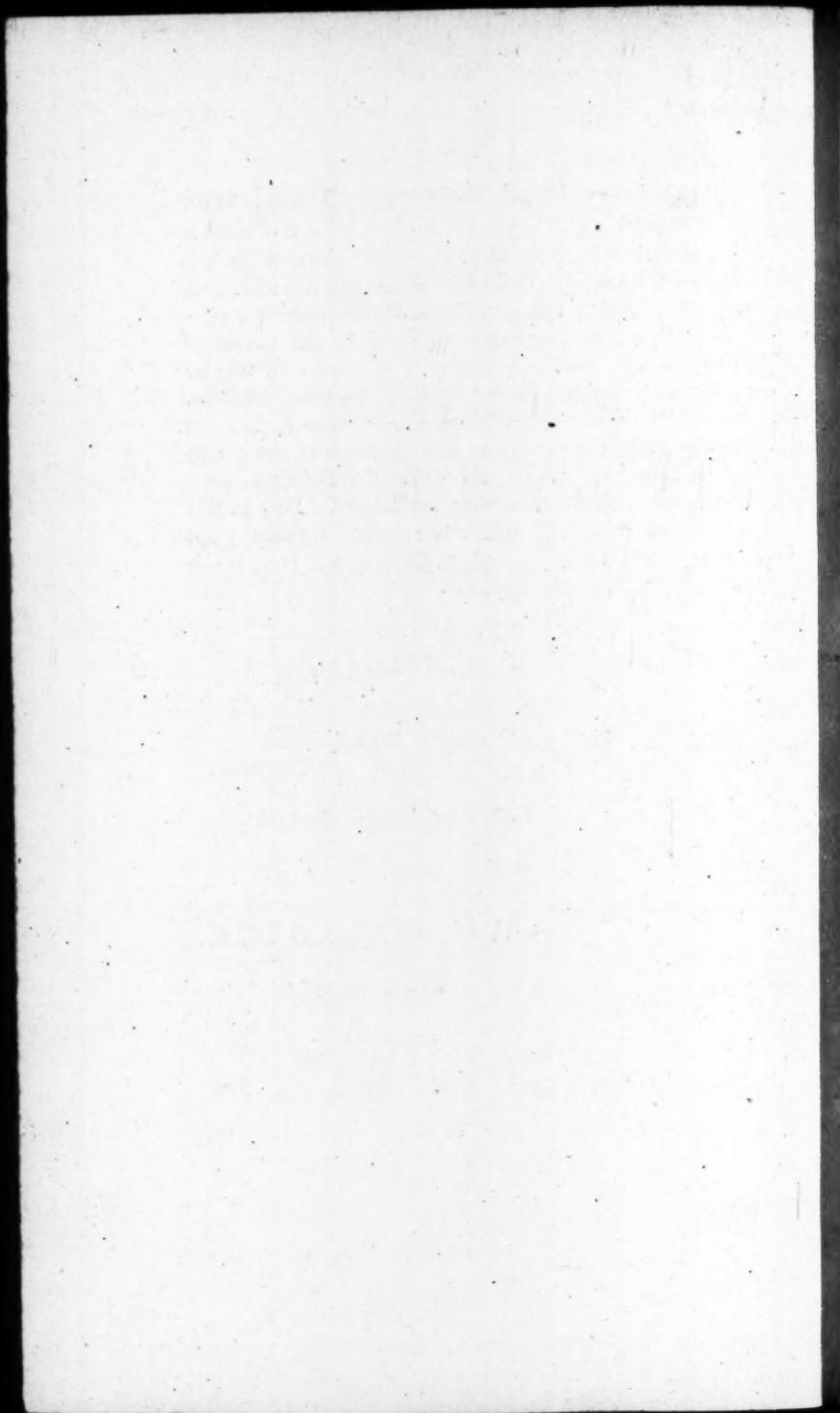
I am, M A D A M,

Your much obliged Friend,

And obedient bumble Servant,

W.M. WALLBECK.

MAY 5, 1785.



THE
LIFE
OF
CERVANTES.

MICHAEL DE CERVANTES SAAVEDRA, whose Writings have given celebrity to SPAIN, amused all EUROPE, and improved the age in which he lived,—himself dragged on a miserable existence,—and died scarcely regretted.

It is but very lately that the place of his birth has been ascertained. MADRID, SEVILLE, LUCHEN, and ALCALA, have severally laid claim to him.

B CER-

CERVANTES, as well as HOMER, CA-MOENS, and other illustrious men, has, since his death, been held in the highest estimation, though he lived almost in want of common necessaries.

The SPANISH ACADEMY, under the patronage of the KING, has at length thought proper to pay—to the *memory* of CERVANTES—those honours which were so justly *his* due. An Edition of ‘DON QUIXOTE,’ of unparalleled typographical splendour, has been newly published. The EDITORS, having their national honour at heart, seem, by the extraordinary care, and expence bestowed upon the *Work*, desirous to atone for the stupid, and almost criminal neglect of the *Author*.

Materials for CERVANTES’s Life have
been

been very sedulously collected, and wrought up by a distinguished Member of the ACADEMY: from which it appears, he was of a Gentleman's family; being Son of RODERICK DE CERVANTES, and LEONORA DE CORTINAS. He was born at ALCALA DE HENARES, a town in NEW CASTILE, the 9th day of October, 1547, in the reign of CHARLES THE FIFTH.

From his earliest infancy he was fond of books. He studied at MADRID, under a very eminent Professor: and soon distinguished himself from the rest of his School-fellows, by his superior genius.

A proficiency in the Latin language, and an insight into Theology, made up the learning of those days. His Parents intended him either for Phy-

B 2 sic,

sic, or the Church ; those two being the only lucrative professions then followed in SPAIN : But, CERVANTES had this in common with many celebrated Poets,—he made verses in spite of his Parents.

AN ELEGY on the death of QUEEN ISABELLA of VALOIS,—several SONNETS,—and a POEM entitled FILENA, were his first productions. The indifferent reception these met with, seemed to our young Author such flagrant injustice, that he thereupon took the resolution of quitting his native Country ; and went to settle at ROME. There penury constrained him to enter into the service of CARDINAL AQUAVIVA, in the humble capacity of *Valet de Chambre*.

Disgusted very soon with an employ
fo

so little suited to the ardor of his disposition, he quitted it, to enlist for a Soldier: and distinguished himself for his bravery at the famed Battle of LEPANTO, won by DON JUAN of AUSTRIA. It was there he received a musket shot in his left hand, which deprived him for ever of the use of it. The only recompence he got for his maimed limb, and the display of extraordinary personal valour, was, the being sent, along with his wounded fellows, to the Hospital at MESSINA.

Little as he had reaped by his first campaign, the trade of a Soldier, with all its ills, seemed to CERVANTES preferable to that of a neglected Poet. As soon as he was well of his wounds, he enlisted anew: and served three years in Garrison at NAPLES.

As

As he was returning, after that, to his own Country, aboard a vessel belonging to his Sovereign, PHILIP THE SECOND, he was captured by MAMI, the most formidable Pirate of those times; and was carried to ALGIERS.

Though Fortune seemed to persecute CERVANTES with her utmost malice, she could not break his enterprising spirit. Become a Slave,—and that to a cruel Master;—almost certain of being put to the torture,—and not improbably—to death,—if he made any attempt to gain his liberty,—he had the hardiness to concert, with fourteen other captive SPANIARDS, upon the means of Escape.

The plan agreed upon was this. One of them was to be redeemed at their

their general expence; was to go straight to SPAIN; and procure a Vessel, to return in, as soon as possible, to ALGIERS; and carry off, under favour of night, his captive countrymen.

To put such a scheme in execution was no very easy matter. In the first place, they had to scrape together a sum of money sufficient to ransom the Adventurer: and then, they had to effect their escape from their respective Masters: to find out a convenient place for a rendezvous; where they could remain concealed until the day of their liberated Fellow's return: nor was it to be supposed but he would have many difficulties to encounter with, on his part.

In

In short, the obstacles were so many, and great, that it was next to an impossibility to effect their purpose. But,—what will not the love of liberty incite us to?

One of the SPANIARDS happening to serve in the capacity of a Gardiner, was of most essential use; for, having to cultivate a very extensive piece of ground, which lay along the Seashore, he undertook to dig, in a part of it little frequented, a Cavern, large enough to contain them all. As he could only work at it by stealth, it took him up no less than two years to complete it.

In the mean time, what with the money they collected by alms, and what they earned by dint of labour,

bour,* they had amassed a sum sufficient to ransom one VIANO, a MAJORCAN; whom they pitched upon, for the arduous undertaking, as well on account of his intimate knowledge of the Coast of BARBARY, as for the

* *Soit par des aumônes, soit à force de travail.*
 From these words of Mr. DE FLORIAN's, (for I profess to translate from the *French*, for want of a competent knowledge of the *Spanish*,) it appears that the Slaves not only partook of charitable donations, but received something like wages; or, more probably, what with the ROMANS was distinguished by the name of "*Peculium*:"— That is, the Slaves, having completed the tasks severally assigned them by their Masters, were at liberty to work for themselves: and whatever they earned by such extra labour was their own separate, and *peculiar* gain.

The treatment, then, which captive Christians experience at the hands of the MAHOMETANS, is less cruel than is commonly imagined; varying, no doubt, according to the willingness of the Slave, on the one hand, and to the disposition of the Master, on the other. Many of the MOORS are, unquestionless, of a benign and merciful nature; though some there may be as unfeeling as those of our WEST-INDIA Planters, who affect to consider their Slaves in the light only of Ourang-outangs.

implicit confidence which they all reposèd in him.

Although the redemption-money was ready, and the Cavern completed, six other months elapsed before all the Captives found means to effect their escape. At length, however, they were assembled: VIANO was ransomed; and parted. First solemnly pledging himself to use all possible dispatch in procuring a vessel; and to return, and liberate his Countrymen.

As CERVANTES had all along been the soul of the undertaking, his ardour in no wise abated now. He took upon himself the greatest trouble, and ran the greatest risk. Every night, as soon as it was dark, he ventured out, to purchase provisions; taking

taking care always to be back before break of day.

The Gardener was the only one of the confederated Slaves that had not eloped; and for the very obvious reason, that he could best serve the common interest by remaining as he was. The appointment of any other to his place, would, in all probability, have led to a discovery of the Cave. So long as he continued in place, he might be considered as a Sentinel on duty in a Watch Tower, from whence to give alarm to the little Garrison, in case of any Enemy's approach; or, which was of equal importance, to apprise them of the coming of auxiliary troops. In other words, from the nature of his employ, and his situation, he was best enabled

to regulate their movements: and at the same time, he could keep a constant look-out for the anxiously-expected *Majorcan*.

VIANO kept his word. He had no sooner arrived at MAJORCA, than he waited on the *Viceroy*: made him acquainted with his countrymen's situation; and demanded (as it was a national concern) his assistance. The *Viceroy* forthwith furnished him with a sloop; and VIANO joyfully set sail for the Coast of BARBARY.

He arrived at ALGIERS on the 28th day of September, 1577; exactly one month from the day he quitted it. He had taken such very accurate note of the Quarter where the Garden was situated, that, he contrived, as had been concerted, to stand in for it at the close of day. The

The Gardener who had sometime perceived the vessel making for land, flattered himself that it *might* possibly be VIANO's. He kept his eyes fixed steadfastly upon it: his mind, the while, suspended betwixt anxious hope, and fearful disappointment. But, when the vessel drew in so near that he could descry the agreed-on signal flying at the mast-head, how extravagant was his joy ! He hastened to his fellows, to communicate the felicitous tidings.

Delicious moment ! What a transition from despondency to joy ! The care-worn wretches have already forgot their sufferings. They congratulate, they embrace each other; they shed even tears of joy: and in wild, tumultuous ecstasy, hurry headlong out of their cavern.

It

It is even so ;—the Gardener has *not* deceived them :—It *is* ;—it *can* be no other than VIANO's bark. And, look ! the very signal. Nearer,—and yet a little nearer,—and they descry VIANO himself standing at the helm. With what emotion they behold him ; they uplift their hands, and with one general voice, hail him their “ Deliverer.”

Now, the vessel's keel is ploughing up the shore ; and the Mariners are letting down a ladder to facilitate their embarkation ;—when,—ah ! sad chance ! a party of MOORS, at the very instant appear, and seeing so many Christians assembled about a bark, give the alarm, shouting “ To arms ;—to arms.” VIANO put to sea again ; and his miserable compatriots fled back

back with precipitation to their hiding-place; there to bewail their cruel disappointment.

CERVANTES did every thing in his power to cheer his drooping companions. He bade them hope VIANO would return; for so he either really thought, or affected to think.—But, VIANO was never more heard of. 

As their minds grew more and more despondent, their bodies kept pace in sufferance. From the dampness of their subterraneous habitation, and for want of air and exercise, the major part of them fell dangerously ill. So long as CERVANTES had strength sufficient left, he ministered to their wants; procured them proper aliment; tended upon, and comforted them: but, at length, falling sick

Tick himself, he was obliged to have recourse to others. He instructed one of his companions, who was yet well, where he was to go, and how he was to conduct himself, in order to procure provisions.

As if the measure of their griefs was not yet full, this man, on whom their security, and very existence depended, proved a traitor. He went straight to AZAN, the King, and made discovery of the whole.— And having, the better to secure his pardon, turned Mahometan, the infamous wretch unhesitatingly conducted a party of Soldiers to the spot where his Countrymen lay concealed.

The wretched SPANIARDS were immediately seized, and put in irons; and carried to the palace, to receive
sen-

tence. When they came into the King's presence, he promised them pardon, if they would discover their Ringleader.—“ That am *I*— (ex-“ claimed CERVANTES;)—save my “ innocent Companions,—and lead “ *me* to death.”—The King, struck with his magnanimity, remitted him his crime; and delivered him to his Master MAMI, with strict injunctions not to inflict punishment on so brave a fellow. The rest too were pardoned, except the poor Gardener, who was executed upon the spot.

CERVANTES, hardly dealt with by fortune;—betrayed by a Countryman, his friend too and companion,—one like himself, in misery;—and reduced again to the condition of a Slave;—instead of giving way to despondency,

D did

did but so much the more impatiently strive to regain his liberty. Four several times he attempted it; but still without success. His last scheme was worthy of a daring mind; it was no less than to cause a general revolt of the Slaves, of whatsoever nation; to overpower the Barbarians, and make himself Master of the City.*

The

* Almost all the Editors of "DON QUIXOTE" have considered the Story of "THE CAPTIVE," interwoven in that Work, as immediately relating to CERVANTES himself. That one particular part of it does, there can be no doubt, because he makes mention of the name of SAAVEDRA; (as will presently be seen, cited in these Memoirs.) There are also certain other portions of it, which, though blended probably with fiction, seem deduced from circumstances incidental to himself. The very passage, for instance, to which this note has reference, appears to be copied from that very History. I quote from Mr. JARVIS's Translation; and in his own words.

" *I had tried a thousand ways of making my escape; but none rightly timed, nor successful.—I purposed to try other means of compassing what I desired: for,*

The Conspiracy was discovered, and CERVANTES, though known to be the author of it, again escaped punishment. So true is it, that undaunted courage forces respect even from our Enemies.

It is probable CERVANTES meant to speak of himself, when, in the Story of "THE SLAVE," (one of the most interesting Episodes in "DON QUIXOTE,") he says—“*The cruel †*

D 2 “ AZAN;

“ for, the hope of recovering my liberty never entirely abandoned me: and whenever what I had contrived, did not answer my design, I presently, without desponding, formed to myself fresh hope to sustain me, though ever so slight, and inconsiderable.”

† The epithet “cruel,” however it may correspond with the general character of AZAN, is improperly foisted in here. For, certainly, from all we learn of his treatment of CERVANTES, (as mentioned in these Memoirs;) so far from deserving to be branded with cruelty, he might pass for a Prince humane, even to a weakness.

Exists

" AZAN, King of ALGIERS, never
 " showed any mercy except to one SAA-
 " VEDRA, a Spanish Soldier; who often
 " times, at hazard of his life, formed
 " enterprises of so daring a nature, that
 " the Infidels are not likely soon to forget
 " them."

Though AZAN spared CERVANTES's life, he did not choose to trust so formidable a Captive in other hands than his own; and therefore purchased him of his Master MAMI; and caused him to be watched very narrowly.

Not long after he was in his possession, the King was obliged to go to

Exists there, at this day, a Potentate upon earth, who would pardon such atrocious crimes? Even in BRITAIN itself, should any one cause an insurrection, and endeavour to make himself Master of the Metropolis, he must have good friends, and good lawyers, and good luck too—to escape hanging.

CON-

CONSTANTINOPLE, but was willing to be rid first of a person whom he considered in so dangerous a light ; he therefore gave intimation to CERVANTES's Relations of his captive state ; in order that they might, if they thought proper, redeem him.

CERVANTES's Mother, who was still living, a Widow, and very poor, disposed of what few valuables she had ; and hastened with the product, about three hundred ducats of silver, to the TRINITY FATHERS, at MADRID ; whose particular business it was to negotiate for the ransome of Spanish Captives. This sum, though the Widow's All, was not deemed adequate. The King insisted upon five hundred golden crowns. The *holy* Fa-

Fathers,—for such, in this instance, they may be truly called,—compassionating the Widow's distress, made up, with their own money, the sum required: and CERVANTES was redeemed on the 19th of September, 1580; after a captivity of five years.

Upon his return to his native land, CERVANTES, out of love with a military life, resolved to devote himself to Letters. He settled in lodgings with his Mother; and indulged the pleasing hope, that by his labours he should be able to procure her a comfortable subsistence.

He was then three and thirty years of age. His first Publication was “GALATEA;” of which he gave only six Books; but never finished it;

it; * although it met with a tolerable reception.

This same year CERVANTES married DONNA CATHERINE DE PELACIOS; a Lady of good family; and doubtless of great personal merit,—for he had no fortune with her. To support his family he took to writing for the Stage; and, he assures us, with very good success. Nevertheless, he soon quitted his theatrical concerns for an employ obtained at SEVILLE, where he went to reside. It was there he

• Mr. DE FLORIAN has completed it; and in a very masterly, and correspondent stile.

The Editor of this Life has, too, translated, (from the French of Mr. DE FLORIAN,) all the Poetry (which is no inconsiderable part) of “GALATEA,” and much of the Prose: and, if the Public think well of this specimen of his labours, he shall hold it his duty, at some future period, to resume a Work, which his literary capriciousness has at present laid aside.

wrote

wrote his “ *NOVELS*,” in which he has so well portrayed the manners and vices of that great City.

CERVANTES was in his fiftieth year, when business called him to LA MANCHA. The inhabitants of an inconsiderable Village, called ARGAMAZILLA, upon some frivolous pretext quarrelled with him; and dragged him to prison: where he was a considerable time confined. It was in that very prison he began his incomparable “ *Don QUIXOTE*.” He thought to revenge himself for the ill treatment he met with, by laying the first scenes of his Hero’s extravagances in that neighbourhood:*

for-

* ‘ *Il crut se venger de ceux qui l’insultoient, en faisant de leur pays la patrie de son Heros.*’—One would almost

forbore mentioning the name of that particular village, throughout the whole romance.*

E

He

almost be apt, then, to suspect, that SAAVEDRA, at the outset of his Work, proposed to himself to make his Hero a more ridiculous, and less amiable personage. And the first lines perhaps might have born so striking a resemblance to some one at ARGAMAZILLA, that if he had identified the Village, he would have subjected himself thereby to fresh persecution, if not to prosecution.

The opening of the History has this remarkable expression : ‘ *In a Village of LA MANCHA, the name of which I purposely omit.*’ These words, having a covert sense, warrant almost any construction.

If it really was the case, that SAAVEDRA began his History of “ *DON QUIXOTE*,” from personal pique; and meant to cauterize some offending individual, his admirers have reason to rejoice that he departed from such his first intention. The larger field which he has taken, has happily given scope to his talents; and raised his Work, from the insignificancy of lampoon, to the dignity of satire.

* ‘ *Il affecta cependant de ne pas nommer une seule fois dans son roman le village où on l’avoit si mal traité.*’ Whatever were the outlines, whether likeness, or caricature, which SAAVEDRA first sketched in his own mind ;

He began with publishing only the
 “FIRST PART” of “DON QUIXOTE;”
 which not meeting with its deserved

mind; it is certain that the portrait he has given to the world, is not more admirable for its colours, and high finishing, than it is for its fair proportions. The characteristic excellencies of **QUIXOTE** are Valour blended with Humanity, Morality grafted on Religion, Learning set off by Elocution, together with a sociability of temper, which rendered him truly delectable; as well on account of the variety, and gracefulness of his conversation, as for the courtesy and elegance of his manners. His very failings, (if by so harsh a name we should choose to distinguish the ebullitions of Philanthropy,) rendered him but more amiable. Even when his too ardent and generous feelings betray him into ridiculous excesses,—and we are tempted to laugh at him, it is impossible to withhold from him our love, and pity.—But,—this is not a proper place for an eulogy on my favourite **DON**. It is sufficient for my purpose here to observe, that **CERVANTES** has invested his Hero with such honourable ensigns, and adorned him with so many virtues, that the first City in the World would be proud to own him. It was not to be imagined, then, that **ARGAMAZILLA** would have the honour of his birth: or that **CERVANTES** would condescend even to mention in his Work, (the fame of which he was conscious would endure to the end of time,) such a paltry, insignificant village; and which, for the indignant treatment he there received, if it merited his notice at all, it would have been—to brand it with infamy.

FUC-

success, CERVANTES, who knew thoroughly the disposition of mankind, immediately wrote a little Piece, which he entitled "THE SERPENT." This pamphlet, which is no where to be met with now, (not even in SPAIN,) seemed, on the face of it, to be a criticism on "DON QUIXOTE," but was in effect a cutting satire upon the Blockheads who detracted from the merit of that excellent Work. Every body read the satire; and "DON QUIXOTE" thereby gained a reputation, which its own intrinsic merit ought rather to have procured it.

Hereupon all the witlings in SPAIN combined against the Author. Though living themselves in a state of warfare, and hatred one of another; they were not so occupied but

they could observe the hasty strides which our literary Giant was making, towards the Temple of Fame ; and they were sensible that, he having once gained admission, the doors would be shut against them for ever. For this reason, they agreed for the present to lay aside their animosities ; and not only patched up a truce amongst themselves, but entered into a league against their formidable Rival. Against him they drew up all their forces ; against him pointed their envenomed shafts, and directed all their artillery. But not in the way of honest, open enemies ; not by boldly facing him in the field, but by harrassing him on his march. They attacked him, not as Grammarians, and Philologists, but as Quibblers, Cavillers ; not with arguments, but insults :

insults: nor blushed they even to add the grossest calumny to the most malicious criticism. In fine, CERVANTES's growing fame proved more fatal to him than the neglect he had formerly experienced.

Whether from the tyranny of the Kings of SPAIN, or her Sub-tyrants the Priests, (be it remembered that it is still an Absolute Monarchy, and the Inquisition subsists in full force)—that Nation has been justly reproached with being very far behind the rest of Europe in Learning. At the time, in particular, in which CERVANTES lived, men of real knowledge and sound judgement were very rare. So few indeed were they who had taste enough to relish the humour, or discern the beauties of his writing,
that,

that, overawed by the host of scribblers in combination against him, he durst not for many years put any thing to press. His means of support thus cut off, he fell into extreme indigence.

Happily for him, the COUNT DE LEMOS and the CARDINAL of TOLEDO, were not insensible of his worth, and occasionally relieved him. Their patronage and bounty, which CERVANTES's grateful nature infinitely magnified, were continued to him to his death: but were neither proportioned to their rank and ability, nor to his penury and merit.

CERVANTES eagerly embraced the first occasion which presented of testifying his sense of the Count's favours, by dedicating to him his " NOVELS ;"

a work which made its appearance about eight years after the “ FIRST “ PART” of “ DON QUIXOTE.” The year following he published his “ JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS.” Neither of these productions turned to much profit: and the COUNT’s pecuniary assistance was so very trifling, that to keep his family from starving he was constrained to publish “ EIGHT “ PLAYS,” which had been refused at the Theatre.

It was CERVANTES’s hard lot to suffer great humiliation, as well as great misery. An Arragonian, who called himself AVELLANEDA, had the impudence to publish, during our Author’s life, “ A CONTINUATION” of “ DON QUIXOTE.” A most wretched performance it was said to be;

be ; wholly devoid of wit, spirit, or taste :—but it abounded in scurrility, and personal abuse of poor CERVANTES. This circumstance alone, which ought to have rendered AVELLANEDA and his work together odious, brought them both into repute.

Our Author answered this unmerited abuse,—as all abuse is best answered,—by taking no manner of notice of it : but contented himself with publishing “ A SECOND PART” of “ DON QUIXOTE,” more excellent, if possible, than the “ FIRST.”

Every one was now convinced of CERVANTES’s superior talents ; and yet,—(how unjust mankind are !)—the more reason they had to be satisfied with our Author’s worth, the less they seemed disposed to pass censure

on

on his execrable rival. SPAIN is not the only country in the world where malice is let loose to hunt down real merit, and detraction is taken into favour.* As long as CERVANTES lived AVELLANEDA was talked of:— as soon as he was dead, AVELLANEDA was forgotten.

The "SECOND PART" of "DON QUIXOTE" was the last of our Author's Writings published in his life time. He was at work upon his "PERSILES AND SIGISMONDA," when

* ' L'ESPAGNE n'est peut-être pas le seul pays du monde où la malignité, si sévère pour les bons ouvrages, est toujours indulgente pour leurs détracteurs.' This remark, which is evidently Mr. DE FLORIAN's, seems to breathe the resentment of an Author smarting under the lash of illiberal criticism: yet I never heard that Mr. F. had published any thing previous to this Life of SAAVEDRA. Or, if he had, one would have thought a Writer so generally correct could not have provoked the spleen of any one worthy his resentment.

F be

he was attacked by a dropsy, of which he died. As he was sensible how small was his chance of cure, he grew very anxious to complete the Work, and by too constant application aggravated his disorder, and thereby accelerated his death.

As CERVANTES, his whole life through had born up manfully against the heaviest pressure of misfortunes, his fortitude did not at the last forsake him. Four days only before he died he ordered his romance, "PERSILES," to be brought him; and in his then weak state, and with a feeble hand, traced out the Epistle dedicatory to the COUNT DE LEMOS. This Dedication is too remarkable to stand in need of apology for inserting it here.

T O

DON PEDRO FERNANDES
DE CASTRO,
COUNT of LEMOS, &c. &c.

WE have an old Spanish Romance, the beginning of which is but too applicable to my present condition,—

“ *Death has fast hold of me, yet I
Would write to you before I die.*”

This is exactly my case. Yesterday I received extreme unction; to-day I am at the point of death: and am sorry that I cannot therefore properly express to you my congratulations upon your safe return to SPAIN. The pleasure that gives me

F 2 *might,*

might, one would think, be the means of saving my life;—but,—GOD's will be done.

YOUR EXCELLENCE will know at least that my gratitude has lasted as long as has my life.

I regret that it is not in my power to finish certain of my works which were intended to be dedicated to your Lordship, viz. “THE GARDEN CALENDAR”;—“THE GREAT BERNARD;”*—and the

“ LAST

* What sort of a Work the “GARDEN CALENDAR” was, its title explains: but, I confess, I am at a loss to guess what SAAVEDRA means by “THE GREAT BERNARD;” and the more so because Mr. DE FLORIAN has not thought proper to canonize it. I suspect, however, that it refers to that well-known Mountain, called “THE GREAT SAINT BERNARD,” on the confines of SWITZERLAND and PIEDMONT; which is upwards of 6000 feet, perpendicular height, above the LEMAN-LAKE, and is covered with eternal Snow. If SAAVEDRA ever visited this Mountain, or beheld only from a distance its towering summit, well might he deem it worthy celebration. If

“ LAST PART” of “ GALATEA,” for which I know you have a sort of partiality. But, to accomplish all this, I had need beg of THE ALMIGHTY to work a miracle in my favour; whereas my most earnest prayer is,—that He will keep YOUR EXCELLENCE in his especial care.

Michael De Cervantes.

MADRID, 19th April, 1616.

The 23d of the same month he died; aged sixty-eight years, six months, and some days.

If I am wrong in this conjectural elucidation, which I propose with great diffidence, I shall think myself particularly obliged to any body who will be at the pains of setting me right, through the channel of the *Reviews*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, or any other respectable periodical Work. Possibly the Spanish Edition of *CERVANTES's Life*, which I have no opportunity of consulting, may of itself be sufficiently clear.

He—

He—who could manifest upon so many trying occasions such spirit, and intrepidity;—could comport himself, when a Captive, as CERVANTES did;—could write such a Book as “*Don Quixote*;” and in a prison too:—and could pen such a Dedication, on his death-bed;—was certainly a man above the ordinary stamp.

REMARKS

R E M A R K S
 ON THE
 W R I T I N G S
 OF
 C E R V A N T E S ;
 BY
Mr. DE FLORIAN.

THE “ POEMS” which CERVANTES published early in life, have not attained to fame: nor, in truth, do they deserve it. His “ SONNETS” and “ ELEGIES” are too strongly tinctured with the false wit, and forced conceits of his time.

His best performance, and that which has given him renown, is “ Don Quixote.” The sound sense,
 the

the pleasantry, and rich vein of irony which runs through the whole ; its truth of character, correctness, and simplicity of stile, have rendered it immortal.

I know, nevertheless, that there are persons, who, from not being able to read it in *Spanish*, think less highly of it, than it merits : which, is to be ascribed, rather to the defects of the translation, than to any faults in the original.

Not but the work itself is now and then tedious ; and some instances, though very few, might be produced, of the Author's bad taste. Such, however, it is in a Translator's power, as it is his duty, to alter, or retrench ; without fear of the imputation of infidelity. Whoever undertakes to trans-

translate a work of humour, may be sure, that the more pleasant, sprightly and agreeable he can render his own version, the more acceptable it will prove.*

G

Not-

* I have taken the liberty to construct this sentence somewhat differently from Mr. DE FLORIAN. His words are, ‘*La traduction la plus agréable est à coup sur la plus fidèle.*’—‘ The more agreeable a translation is the more *exact* it must be accounted.’—Which, literally taken, is not true.

A Translator but indifferently qualified for his task, will adhere with scrupulous exactness to the very *words* of the original:—*Verbum verbo curabit reddere*:—and his version would be as much more *exact*, as it would be less agreeable, than that of a person of genius, and strong conception; who, solicitous only to transfuse the *spirit* of his Author, would sometimes contract, sometimes dilate the sense; not only the better to adapt it to the idiom of the language, but to the peculiar humour of his countrymen.

CICERO, speaking of the orations which he had translated from the Greek, says,—‘ *Nec converti, ut in-terpres, sed ut orator, sententiis iisdem et earum formis, tanquam figuris, verbis ad nostram con-stitudinem aptis.*’

Mr.

Notwithstanding the faults of the Translation, which tend to weaken the force of the wit and satire, of the Original, so great is its intrinsic merit, that we still hold the work in the highest estimation. CERVANTES has had the address to render the Episodes themselves interesting; and the main History is told with such infinite humour, and the Characters put into such a variety of laughable situations, that our very hangings, as well as our pictures and prints, recount the Adventures of QUIXOTE; and our children recognise, and laugh at SANCHO PANCA.

Our Author's " NOVELS" are very

Mr. DE FLORIAN's meaning, I take to be this: In translating a book professedly humorous, he, who has the address to make his own version a work of humour, fully answers the intention of the original.

inferiour

inferior to his “ *Don Quixote*.” There are twelve of them ; but only four deserve to be called *CERVANTES*’s, viz.—“ *THE CURIOUS IMPERTINENT* ;” which he has inserted in his “ *Quixote* :”—“ *RINCONET AND CORTADILLA* ;” a ludicrous, but correct account of the Sharpers of *SEVILLE* :—“ *THE TIES OF CONSANGUINITY*,” which is the best wrought, and most interesting of any of them :—and “ *The DIALOGUE betwixt Two Dogs*.” This last is an admirable piece of Criticism ; not less lively, than philosophical. The manners of his Countrymen are described in it with great wit and precision.

The “ *JOURNEY TO PARNASSUS*,” is a Poem, in several cantos. The Author feigns, that, *PARNASSUS* being

ing besieged by legions of bad Poets, APOLLO sends MERCURY into SPAIN, to call in the aid of his favourite Allies. MERCURY comes to CERVANTES, and shows him the list, as well of those summoned to his assistance, as of the Besiegers. No subject could be more happily imagined by a Man of Talents, who sought an occasion to exercise his wit upon certain Blockheads, who had provoked him. This work nevertheless is not very pleasant in itself; and not at all interesting to us.

There are eight of CERVANTES's "COMEDIES" yet extant. In the Preface to them he observes, he had written twenty, *or* thirty. To those, who know how much labour goes to the writing of a single Play only, it will

will appear extraordinary that an Author should not be able to ascertain the exact number.

Whether the number of Plays CERVANTES wrote was twenty *or* thirty, is immaterial; for to judge of those which are lost by those which remain, we have no cause of regret. I have read through the eight he published with great attention; and not one of them is so much as tolerable. The ground plots are neither interesting in themselves, nor well wrought. We meet frequently with flashes of wit, but never with verisimilitude. Such are their general characteristics.

In the one which is intitled “ THE FORTUNATE LECHER,” the Hero, in the first act, is the greatest Rascal in all

all SEVILLE; in the second he is a Jacobine Monk, at MEXICO; and is a pattern of piety. He has frequent contests with the Devil, upon the stage; and always comes off victorious. Called in to pray by a woman at the point of death; one who had led a very profligate life; Father CRUX (for so he is called) exhorts her to confess; which she, despairing of pardon, refuses to do. The zealous Confessor, to save her from consequent impenitency, proposes to make an exchange with her,—his Merits against her Sins. The bargain is struck; and a contract signed in due form. The woman confesses, and expires: Angels appear to take away her soul; and the Devil comes to lay in his claim to the Monk: who, to his astonishment, finds himself grown

all

all over leprous. In the third act, he dies, and performs miracles.*

Such is the plot of a Play written by the Author of “*DON QUIXOTE*:” and perhaps the best Play he ever wrote.†

There

* If Mr. DE FLORIAN had been a good Catholic, he would have *noted* the manifest impropriety of giving the power of performing miracles to a Person turned over to the Devil.

† What an eccentric genius *SAAVEDRA*’s was! Who would think it possible that the composer of so fine a dramatic Story, as “*DON QUIXOTE*,” could so deviate from all manner of beauty and order; and pen so execrable a farce! If it had not been published by himself, there is but one circumstance by which we could have guessed it to have been his: that is, the boldness with which he has lifted his satiric hand against the all-sufficient Clergy. Not, probably, that it was done in so direct, and unqualified a manner, as these outlines of the Comedy might lead us to suppose; but, by covert satire; by irony, if not finely imagined, at least so happily expressed, that it would bear the construction of obsequiousness, or even adulation. The Spies, else, of that infernal tribunal, called the *Holy Inquisition*, would certainly have reported *SAAVEDRA*. And yet, how gross must have been the ignorance, how rank the stupidity of those

There are also extant eight “ INTERLUDES,” written by CERVANTES; and which are far preferable to his “ PLAYS.” They are natural and unforced in their plots; and humorous in their Dialogue. Some of them rather border on licentiousness; but, two of them are every way charming: “ THE CAVE of SALAMANCA;” and “ THE MOCK PRODIGY.”

“ PER-

those times not to have detected the burlesque of such a representation!

Taking the Comedy in one sense, or rather one word of it, in (I fear) its only sense, literal or figurative, I wish that CERVANTES had not been jesting; but had written it in good and sober earnest. The word which I advert to is “ CRUX;” which he has casually taken, for the Confessor’s name. I do not affect to be over-righteous, (God—alas!—knows, how very, very far I am from that,) but I cannot, and who, that has the least sense of Religion can, bear to see “ the Cross,”—that precious memorial of our redemption, applied as a fit name for a ludicrous character.

I marvel much how that word slipped from SAAVEDRA’s

“ PERSILES AND SIGISMUNDA,” is a long, tedious Romance, over-charged with Episodes, and marvellous Adventures. One would think, CERVANTES intended it as an imitation of the old, Greek Romances ; which were once in very high estimation ; and are not without their admirers now : but not even our Author’s brilliant imagination could render such a Work interesting. The Personages being

DRA’s pen ; unless through careless haste. From his head, or heart, assuredly it never came : for, if ever Writer of a work of humour took pains to inculcate Religion, it was the Author of “ DON QUIXOTE.” There is not a Chapter in the Book that does not abound in religious and moral precepts. And the Hero of the Romance, whatever other extravagancies he is guilty of, never forgets his GOD. Acquitting SAAVEDRA, which I certainly do, of any intention of blasphemy, I would not have fixed the Reader’s attention upon it, but by way of hint to Writers in general, to be exceedingly cautious in the use of words, the injudicious application of which, may, centuries after their death, bring their religious character in question.

H

for

for ever scampering about, and to no end; their frequent hair-breadth e-scapes; and what more than all the rest, has contributed to impede its fame, is its very unnatural jumble of Religion and Love. In spite of all these faults, the language itself is so good; the drawings in some parts of it so correct; and the one particular Episode of “ RUPERT” so entertaining, that, upon the whole, it may be said to be a Work of merit!

The last of his Works I have to speak of is “ GALATEA.” At the time CERVANTES wrote it, SPAIN was the nation of the world the most gallant. Love was the sole occupation of the Spaniards, the subject of all their Books.

MON-

MONTEMAYOR, a celebrated Poet, had just before published his “ DIANA ;” a Romance which met with great success : and deservedly too ; for it is written in very elegant language ; and has both wit, and delicacy of sentiment. The poetry is absolutely enchanting. All which, together with the particularly affecting simplicity of the Story of “ ABINDARRAES, THE MOOR,” more than compensate for the improbabilities, the magic, and the want of action ; faults with which the “ DIANA” stands justly charged.*

* It seems odd that a Work, which is objected to for the insertion of supernatural agency, of *magic*, as well as of the *marvellous*,—should at the same time be chargeable with the default of action. An Author indulging himself in the use of such machinery, must manage it very awkwardly not to make at least a bustle with it, though it should have no other good effect.

CERVANTES, who was very well apprized of these defects, (as appears by the examination of the Books in the Don's library,) avoided some of them, in his “*GALATEA*,” but not all. His characters are more interesting, and the incidents less unnatural: but in point of style, more particularly in his verse, he is very inferiour to *MONTEMAYOR*.

Infected with the scholastic jargon then prevalent, CERVANTES makes his Shepherds talk as if they were at the university. Their speeches upon Love are downright dissertations; in which they cite *MINOS*, *MARC-ANTONY*, and other Deities and Heroes of ancient History. When *THYRSIS* would console his friend chagrined by his Mistress's refusal, he addresses him thus: “*They say your Mistress*
“ *is*

“ is as beautiful in person, as she is
 “ hard of heart; but what she is
 “ most celebrated for is her wit. If
 “ that is true,—which no doubt it
 “ is,—it follows, that she knows
 “ herself; from knowing herself, she
 “ knows her own worth; from know-
 “ ing her worth, she will not consent
 “ to her ruin; and from not consent-
 “ ing to her ruin, she cannot consent
 “ to your desires.” *

In another place, an absent Lover
 writes to his Mistress,—“ Though it
 “ seems to me I have the sences of

* MR. DE FLORIAN having inserted, (in a note,) THYRSIS's speech in *Spanijs*, I have not scrupled to depart from his translation, to give the sense of the original better, or at least, more logically. For, in the last link but one of the chain of deductions, Mr. F— says, “ *qu' elle ne veut pas se perdre*;” and then draws the conclusion—“ *et de cette volonté, qu' elle ne veut pas céder, &c.*” whereas the Spanish has it, “ *no querer perderse, y de no querer perderse viene el no querer contentarte.*”

“ seeing,

“ seeing, hearing, and feeling, I am
 “ no more than a Phantom, formed
 “ by Love, and kept up by Hope.”

Throughout the Work, the Sun never enlightens the world with a single ray, but what he borrows from **GALATEA**’s eyes.

Yet amidst all its extravagances we meet with charming thoughts, and just sentiments happily expressed; with situations truly interesting; and the emotions, and strugglings of the heart, admirably described. It is on these accounts I have translated, or rather *imitated* **CERVANTES**’s “ **GALATEA**,” in preference to any other of his works.

As it is very possible this Romance, under its present guise, may not meet with success, I ought, in justice to **CERVANTES**, to specify what particular alter-

alterations I have thought proper to make.

“ *GALATEA*,” in the original, is in six Books, and is not finished; I have compressed those six Books into three, and have added a fourth, to complete the Work. Scarcely any part of the Romance, as I have given it to the world, can be called a translation; and the poetry yet less so, than any other part.

The ground work of the Story is *CERVANTES*’s: but I have changed the incidents as often as I judged I could do so to advantage. I have added many new scenes in the first three books; and the fourth is entirely my own.

Fault will be found with me, perhaps, for the number of Episodes; and

and the paucity of adventures immediately relating to GALATEA:—In the original, the Episodes are more numerous, and GALATEA less frequently appears. MONTEMAYOR has committed the same fault in his “ DIANA ;” which, properly speaking, is not so much a distinct Story, as a collection of a great many.

As to the Combats, the Duels, which the Reader may be surprised to find in a pastoral Romance, they are a tribute CERVANTES paid to the humour of the times. I do not recollect a single Spanish Play or Romance, that has not fighting, of some kind or other, in it. That nation, one of the bravest of Europe,—and unquestionably the most impassioned,—hold no book in estimation that does not treat

treat largely of Love, and War. But, were it otherwise, CERVANTES, surely, to whom so many extraordinary incidents happened in real life, might very well be pardoned for introducing a few in a Work of this nature.

I have but one word to add, in vindication of myself for having presumed to criticise the Works of our Author. Besides my having made the Spanish language my particular study, I have been aided in my judgement by a noble Spaniard, whose attachment to Letters, is equalled only by his love of his Country. I speak of the Count *De Pilos*; who, like CERVANTES, is famed no less for his talents, than his misfortunes.

F I N I S.

